

## Introduction

According to the Centers for Disease Control, a global pandemic influenza outbreak represents one of the most catastrophic threats to the U.S. public health system. In the 20th century, three major pandemics were caused by the emergence of several new Influenza A virus subtypes. These pandemics resulted in over 600,000 deaths in the United States (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2005).

In April 2009, we saw the emergence of a new influenza (flu) virus. This new virus, called Pandemic H1N1 flu (early on called "swine flu"), was first detected in people in Mexico and the United States. The CDC determined that the new flu virus H1N1 was contagious and there was evidence of human-to-human transmission.

On June 11th, 2009, The World Health Organization (WHO), Director General, Margaret Chan declared a Phase 6 Pandemic due to sustained worldwide human-to-human transmission of the H1N1 flu virus. At that time, WHO considered the overall severity of the influenza pandemic to be moderate. This assessment was based on scientific evidence available to WHO, as well as input from its Member States on the pandemic's impact on their health systems, and their social and economic functioning.

By August, 2009, the World Health Organization had reported 177,457 Cases worldwide and 1,462 Deaths. Around this time in the United States, testing was mostly limited to those individuals who were hospitalized in critical care or for those who had died. Therefore, it was difficult to ascertain exactly the number of cases due to the limited testing. However, CDC estimated that approximately one million US residents may be infected with H1N1.

The new H1N1 virus strain poses a huge potential threat to our public health system. Thus, it is imperative that we educate members of our community on the importance of how to survive and care for others in the event of a severe flu pandemic through trainings such as those offered through CERTs.

### ***Why is it important to teach CERT participants the impact of pandemic influenza?***

A pandemic will have widespread, possibly global, impact versus geographically-bound local impact. As a result, any outside assistance that is available will be limited and possibly sporadic. Given this scenario, it is critical to teach community volunteers, such as CERT volunteers, the importance of preparation, prevention, and control of the pandemic influenza virus.

A pandemic's primary effect will be on people. A worst-case scenario pandemic will cause illness in a very large section of the population. The healthcare system throughout the nation will be overwhelmed. Due to absenteeism; basic services, such as law enforcement, fire, emergency response, communications, transportation, and utilities could be disrupted. Supply chains for essential items such as food, water, and other emergency provisions may be compromised.

CERT volunteers can:

- Play a vital role by organizing neighborhoods to respond to a pandemic.
- Assist Public Health staff in the Alternate Care Sites/Facilities.
- Coordinate neighborhood activities with Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) response.
- Distribute food to those in home isolation or who those who are otherwise homebound.
- Distribute public health fact sheets and resource lists in your neighborhoods.
- Help disseminate critical information, including the availability of resources in the community.
- Help verify if essential services are operational.

A pandemic can last for **12-24 months**, occurring in waves (peak periods of illness) with three to nine months between waves. This is different from other emergencies that may last for several days to weeks.

Unlike most emergencies, where there is no warning, there may be a short period of time to prepare for a pandemic emergency. Experts estimate that a pandemic influenza virus could spread around the world in 30 to 60 days. If the pandemic starts in another country and is detected immediately by the World Health Organization's global surveillance network, we may receive notice of the impending pandemic.

This toolkit will help prepare CERT participants for a pandemic influenza.

### ***What is the CERT Pandemic Influenza-Train-the-Trainer Toolkit?***

The Santa Clara County Public Health Department Advanced Practice Center (APC) created the *CERT Pandemic H1N1 Influenza Train-the-Trainer Toolkit* for the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to assist local health departments provide a pandemic influenza training resource for local CERT Trainers in their jurisdictions. The toolkit is designed to:

- Increase awareness of the threat of a pandemic influenza and its impact on the community.
- Give CERT participants the education and tools needed to increase preventive health behaviors and limit the spread of the pandemic influenza virus.

### ***How long is the training?***

The *CERT Pandemic H1N1 Influenza Toolkit* comes in three versions:

- 1) Version 1: PowerPoint, DVD & Interactive Exercise (2.5-3 hours)
- 2) Version 2: PowerPoint & DVD (1 hour)
- 3) Version 3: PowerPoint & DVD (30 minutes)

The different versions includes PowerPoint presentations (PPT), learning objectives, a DVD titled, *Why Don't We Do It in Our Sleeves?*<sup>©</sup>, an interactive exercise, and various handouts.

### ***Using the toolkit -example***

Trainers can customize the training to by choosing the version that best suits their needs. The training can also be given on different days, for example:

**Day 1:** Students learn about H1N1, personal preparedness and CERT response to Pandemic H1N1.

**Day 2:** Students can think through what they learned previously and apply their knowledge during the scenario-based interactive exercise.

### ***Updating training***

The PowerPoint can be customized for your area and should be updated as the situation with H1N1 is fluid and can change quickly. Please refer to the following websites for H1N1 updates:

- [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)
- [www.naccho.org](http://www.naccho.org)
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)
- [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)
- <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/>

### ***What is included?***

Each training version includes an agenda and all the documents needed to conduct the training. Handouts such as guides, fact sheets and supplies checklists are included in the toolkit. In addition, most of the handouts in the toolkit have been translated in the following languages:

- Chinese
- Farsi
- Japanese
- Korean
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Vietnamese

Trainers can also use the "Certificate of Completion" sample included in the toolkit to personalize it for their students.